

Using SOCIAL STYLE™ Training for More Successful Coaching

Coaching is a \$1 billion industry in America. Organizations are seeing that coaching is a valuable asset and even a necessary fixture of the modern workplace. Marketing Sherpa's 2008 survey of HR professionals and people who received coaching reported that 90 percent found coaching somewhat or very valuable. The survey found that the coaching paradigm is moving from an as-needed basis to regular meetings, and that coaching is becoming an integral part of leadership development programs rather than a short-term tool to solve conflict.

The TRACOM Group recently surveyed 185 people who coach as part of their job, in an effort to determine current trends. All survey respondents had previously received training in SOCIAL STYLE™, the behavior model developed by the TRACOM Group.

Key Findings

Value of Coaching

- 34 percent of respondents coached others between 10 percent and 25 percent of the time
- A quarter of the people spent between 25 percent and 50 percent of the time coaching others
- 57 percent said “I am spending just the right amount of time coaching others”
- 37 percent said “I am not spending as much time coaching others as I should or want to”
- 82 percent were confident in their ability to coach others
- 99 percent of respondents said the coaching they provide positively impacts their organization’s performance
- 99 percent stated that effectively coaching employees is a critical skill for managers
- 87 percent said they had seen managers falter in their careers due to an inability to effectively coach their employees

SOCIAL STYLE in Coaching

- 95 percent had applied their knowledge of Social Style when coaching others
- 98 percent said that to effectively coach others, it is important to build a good relationship with them
- 82 percent said that as a result of Social Style training, it became easier for them to give coaching feedback to people, even if the feedback is negative
- 82 percent said that when applying what they learned about Social Style, people were more receptive to their coaching feedback
- 97 percent said that understanding Social Style helped them to be a more effective coach
- 94 percent said Social Style training would help other managers at their company to be better coaches

A Coaching Success Story

A high-performing sales executive was perceived by peers as being untrustworthy because of inappropriately sharing information and talking negatively about others. The coaching process included the collection of specific feedback from peers and an exploration of several problem incidents. The coach and leader then developed a specific plan to change behavior and held one-on-one meetings with peers to resolve conflict and restore relationships. This executive was later promoted to Vice-President of North American Sales.

Coaching Considered Beneficial

Enthusiasm for the coaching process is confirmed by the fact that employees in a coaching or leadership position at work feel they are spending the right amount of time in that coaching capacity (57 percent) or would like to spend more time coaching (37 percent). Very few people (6 percent) wanted to do less coaching. In fact, 65 percent of respondents strongly agreed and 35 percent agreed with this statement: “Effectively coaching employees is a critical skill for managers.” Coaching skills are not only beneficial to the company, then, but to personal advancement as well.

Performance consultant and author Steve Buchholz agrees. “Coaches engage people in conversations that help them develop or improve their ability to contribute to the team and organization. Coaching is a primary way to unleash potential.”

Virtually all respondents said that the coaching they provide positively impacts their organization’s performance. That’s at least in part because coaching can diffuse the conflicts that interfere with good communication and productivity and help individuals overcome barriers to personal success and high performance.

Coaching With Style

Social Style is the world’s best-known behavior model. Individuals are evaluated according to their preferred behaviors, and are then categorized into one of four Social Style. Identifying an individual’s Style helps them

understand their verbal and non-verbal communication tendencies and how they are perceived by others.

Survey participants have all received Social Style training, and the vast majority (95 percent) have applied their knowledge of Social Style when coaching others. The four different Styles engage with the world in very different ways, and each has specific preferences on how to be coached. If these Styles are not taken into consideration, coaching can quickly degenerate into an unproductive, or even harmful, conversation.

For this reason, 98 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that “To effectively coach others, it is important to build a good relationship with them.” The International Coach Federation agrees. One of its core coaching competencies is “Establishing Trust and Intimacy with the Client (person being coached) — the ability to create a safe, supportive environment that demonstrates respect for the client’s perceptions and learning style.” Knowledge and use of Social Style helps create that environment.

As a result of Social Style training, 82 percent of respondents report that it’s become easier for them to give coaching feedback to people, even if the feedback is negative, and that people are now more receptive to their coaching feedback. Understanding Social Style has helped 96.9 percent of participants to be more effective coaches.

The TRACOM Group helps individuals and organizations improve workplace performance. Much of TRACOM's work is based on the SOCIAL STYLE MODEL,™ a proven model for effective work and personal relationships. In response to a growing need for coaching resources, the TRACOM Group has created a guide, **Coaching With Style**.

The book provides specific advice to help coaches build better relationships, reduce workplace tension and more.



Summary and Implications

People who coach as part of their job find coaching valuable and beneficial to their organizations. In order to coach well, it is necessary to build rapport with those being coached. Survey participants overwhelmingly agree that using their Social Style training helps them to establish that relationship and give negative feedback in a way that others can hear and accept, and that people are now more receptive to their coaching feedback. The ability to interact effectively and gain support of coworkers is positively and significantly related to workplace

effectiveness. Thus, it's not a person's Style that determines success, rather how effectively each person uses their Style with others.

In short, almost all respondents feel that knowing and applying what they learned in their Social Style training makes them better coaches. That is why 93.9 percent of them believe that this training would help other managers at their companies to be better coaches. Understanding and applying Style can be a key ingredient in improving the effectiveness of communication and increasing the productivity of coaching efforts.

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